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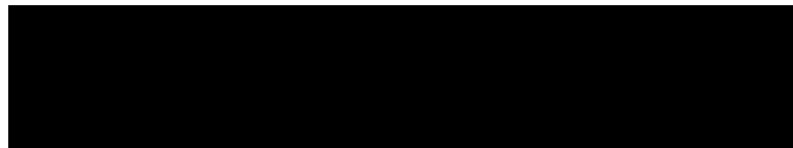
Mandatory Review

Case # NLJ 98-262

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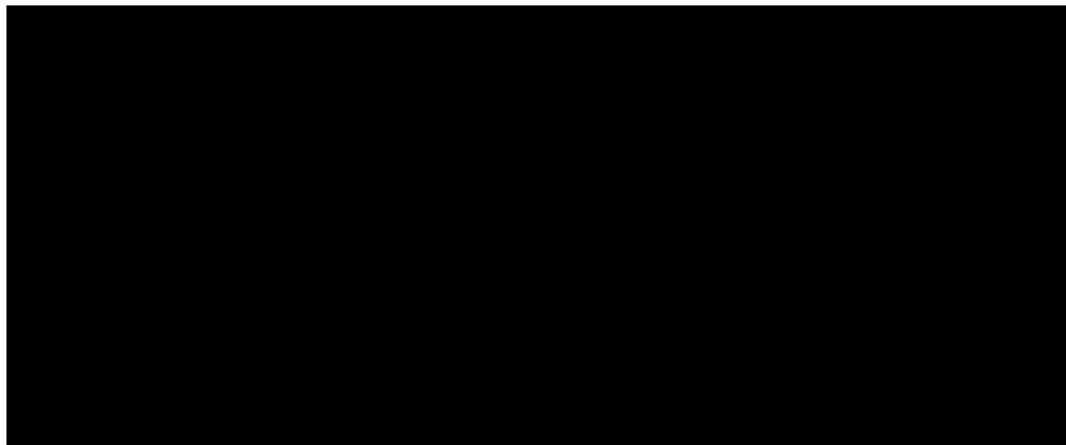
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SC No. 01276/68

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
22 May 1968

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Situation in Haiti

1. The rapid collapse of the invasion staged by a 25-30 man group of non-Communist Haitian exiles has confirmed the underlying strength of the Duvalier regime and probably bolstered the dictator's position. The exiles who remain at large in the Cap-Haitien area--apparently numbering about 18--are now attempting to elude capture. There has been no sign that any of Duvalier's key security officials wavered during the invasion. The calm and efficient manner in which Duvalier reacted suggests he is confident of his position.

2. The Haitian Coalition--the organization behind the invasion--has been active in the Bahamas over the past few months attempting to lay the groundwork for an assault on Duvalier. In late March, 77 exiles were arrested by Bahamian authorities while apparently preparing for an invasion. In early May, a boat with some arms aboard that appeared to be linked with a plan to invade Haiti sank in the Bahamas and its occupants were arrested. Although Duvalier probably had some inkling that the Haitian Coalition was plotting an attack on him--for example he had reports that the exiles were attempting to obtain an airplane--he apparently had no precise information on the nature and timing of the attack. It appears that the exiles had not adequately trained and equipped themselves for a sustained, well-organized effort.

Note: This memorandum was produced solely by CIA. It was prepared by the Office of Current Intelligence and coordinated with the Clandestine Services.

3. In attempting to evaluate exile activity, Duvalier was apparently confused by a number of false reports. On 16 May, for example, he was informed by the Dominicans that an invasion had already taken place at Cap-Haitien. On 19 May, a Santo Domingo press dispatch carried the same story. None of these reports was true, and [REDACTED] commented that they appeared to be "a compounding of an original rumor." [REDACTED] noted that the reports of landings of men and arms originated from untested sources.

EO 12958
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4. Once the invasion had occurred, Duvalier's security forces reacted relatively effectively. At first there was some disorganization in the Cap-Haitien area and [REDACTED] reflected confusion and some instances of cowardice. Duvalier, however, was able to mobilize a force of about 200 in Port-au-Prince and sent them by truck on the arduous 120-mile trip to Cap-Haitien. These troops, under the leadership of the ruthless Lt. Col. Franck Romain, seem to have rapidly routed the exiles. Port-au-Prince remained calm throughout the attack, even though the exiles had staged an ineffectual air raid on the National Palace. Elsewhere in the country, the security forces doubled their alert and arrested a number of suspected opponents. Significantly, there have been no indications of widespread popular support for the exiles, although they may have received some support in Cap-Haitien. Undoubtedly the exiles mis-assessed the degree of popular opposition to Duvalier and failed to take into account that most enemies of the dictatorship inside Haiti are effectively cowed. In addition, most people in the Port-au-Prince area were deliberately kept in the dark about the situation by Duvalier.

EO 12958
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(S)

5. There has been no indication of Communist involvement in the invasion or Communist support for the exiles once they arrived. Although the Haitian Communist movement is small and badly divided, there appears to have been an increase in Haitian Communist activity, particularly by Communists in exile, over the past year. One manifestation of this was the recent arrest of a Communist Haitian exile in Canada who was on his way back

-2-

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to Haiti from Cuba. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] he was carrying revolvers, ammunition, and subversive instructions. [REDACTED] last summer [REDACTED] a few Communists--trained in Cuba--had returned to Haiti. So far, however, their presence inside Haiti has not been confirmed and they do not appear to have carried out any anti-Duvalier activities.

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6. Although Duvalier has recently demonstrated some concern that former Dominican "constitutionalist" leader Caamano--who is believed to be in Cuba--will lead a Communist invasion of Haiti, there is no evidence that such a plan actually exists. The Communists, both inside and outside Haiti, have been preparing for long-term guerrilla warfare and recently have been debating the best tactics for implementing their strategy.

7. The invasion attempt is likely to re-enforce Duvalier's underlying bitterness and antagonism toward the United States. His representatives at the UN and in the OAS have implied that the invasion could not have been staged without US complicity. This contrasts with their initial effort to influence the US position by attempting to portray Cuba as the source of the invasion. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Duvalier called the re-enforcements sent to Cap-Haitien together prior to their departure and told them that the invasion was the work of the CIA and part of President Johnson's anti-Negro program--a common Duvalier propaganda theme.

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8. It seems unlikely that either Communist or non-Communist exiles have the capacity to topple Duvalier in the immediate future. As demonstrated by this week's ill-fated invasion, Duvalier's security are loyal and relatively effective against small unorganized invasion. Duvalier appears to have neutralized all actual or potential opposition to him within the government. Prospects are that the 61-year-old Duvalier--who has recently appeared in good health--will be Haiti's "Dictator for Life" for some time to come, barring, of course, assassination.

-3-

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